not been previously reported in the context of a stroke. This retraction was unlikely to result from an levator palpabrae overactivation (as it would be expected according to Hering's law) as it was not influenced by manual elevation of the contralateral lid.[1]

Various patterns of eyelid disorders may be encountered in patients with focal mesencephalic lesions. Ptosis may be unilateral when central caudal nucleus efferent fibres are damaged, or bilateral, if the central caudal nucleus itself is involved.[1] A bilateral eyelid retraction results from a lesion that involves either the posterior commissure or the nucleus of the posterior commissure itself.[6] Lastly, a mixed pattern, the plus-minus lid syndrome, consists in ipsilateral ptosis and contralateral eyelid retraction.[8] It is ascribed to a lesion involving both central caudal nucleus efferent (ipsilateral ptosis) and afferent (contralateral eyelid retraction) fibres.[8] However, in this latter case, the ipsilateral ptosis could mask an eyelid-retraction. Therefore, in our patient, absence of ipsilateral ptosis shows that, at least in this case, eyelid retraction was strictly contralateral. According to anatomical data, it may be suggested that eyelid retraction in our patient resulted from a lesion involving central caudal nucleus afferent fibres—that is, inputs from the nucleus of the posterior commissure, most probably in the region of the supraoculomotor area.[6] It may thus be inferred that inhibitory connections between the nucleus of the posterior commissure and central caudal nucleus (through the supraoculomotor area) are unilateral, and crossed. A similar crossed pattern may also exist for excitatory afferents to the central caudal nucleus, as hemispheric lesion resulting in contralateral ptosis have been reported.[1]

Inhibition of the levator palpabrae occurs mainly in conjunction with orbicularis oculi activation,[1] a phenomenon that is controlled by monocular pathways. Thus, this push-pull system would have an homogenous unilateral organisation. Lastly, the crossed pattern of these inhibitory connections is reminiscent of the crossed levator palpabrae innervation which exists in phylogenetically lower mammals.[9]

In summary, it may be inferred from this finding and from anatomical data that the central caudal nucleus receives inhibitory inputs from the contralateral nucleus of the posterior commissure, and that lesion of these pathways leads to contralateral eyelid retraction.

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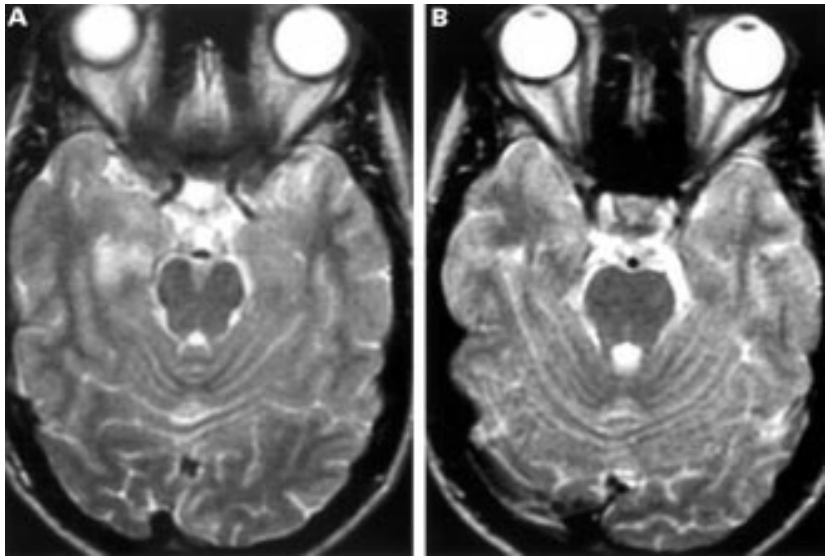
Behçet's syndrome may present with partial seizures

A 25 year old right handed male shop assistant presented with seizures, visual problems, and malaise. The first symptoms were arthralgia and fatigue shortly followed by a bifrontal headache. A few days later he developed a visual disturbance that he described as peripheral blurred patches in both visual fields similar to the effect of staring into a bright light. About 2 weeks from the onset of symptoms he was driving when he had numerous episodes of deja vu and three episodes of a pungent sickly smell. He then lost consciousness and crashed his car into a public house without serious injury. An off duty nurse witnessed a generalised tonic-clonic seizure at the time. He was admitted to hospital and investigated but no diagnosis was made. The headache stopped completely in a month; the visual defects improved slightly but persisted. Six months later he had a relapse with recurrent headaches, pyrexia, and enlargement of the scotoma in the right eye and he was readmitted. He had had recurrent oral ulceration for 3 years and psoriasis since childhood, but no genital ulceration, red eyes, or venous thrombosis.

On examination he had a low grade pyrexia. General examination was otherwise normal with no evidence of pathergy at sites of needle pricks, genital ulceration, arthritis, or venous thrombosis. He was oriented with no meningism. Acuity was 6/5, N4.5 bilaterally. Colour vision was normal. In the left eye there was a partial superior scotoma, in the right eye a superionasal scotoma. Fundoscopy showed specific features of the uveitis of Behçet's syndrome. This consisted of multiple pale yellow patches of retinal infiltration lying deep to retinal vessels. Eye movements were normal. Pupils were equal and reactive with no afferent pupillary defect. The rest of the cranial nerve examination, gait, and limb examination was normal.

Biochemistry, liver function, thyroid function, coagulation studies, serum electrophoresis, serum ACE, B_{12}, folate, and plasma amino acids were all normal. Haematology showed a slight lymphopenia of 1.0 (1.5–4.0) and slightly increased erythrocyte sedimentation rate at 19. Autoantibody profile, RF titre, and syphilis serology were negative; CSF pressure was normal, but analysis was abnormal with 20 white cells (93% lymphocytes, not reactive) and a slightly increased protein of 0.88 g/l, glucose was 3.0 mmol/l (serum 4.2 mmol/l). The CSF had no oligoclonal bands; CSF ACE and cytology were normal. Chest radiography, ECG, transthoracic ECHO, and extracranial magnetic resonance angiography (MRA) were normal. An EEG showed a mild asymmetry of α-rhythm being lower amplitude and less well formed on the left but no epileptiform features. Brain MRI was performed on two occasions. The MRI at presentation showed two small focal T2 hyperintense lesions in the head of the right caudate nucleus and more diffuse signal change in the right mesial temporal lobe within the head and body of the right hippocampus (figure). There was no evidence of venous sinus thrombosis.

A diagnosis of Behçet's syndrome with neurological complications was made on the basis of typical retinal lesions, multiple focal CNS lesions, recurrent mouth ulceration and a constitutional disturbance. Prednisolone was started at a dose of 40 mg daily, his symptoms rapidly improved and so combination immunosuppression was not used. A second MRI, a year later, showed that the lesions previously seen in the caudate had disappeared and that in the mesial temporal region had undergone a marked reduction in size (figure). There have been no more seizures and he has remained off antiepileptic medication.



T2 weighed MRI showing a mesial temporal lobe lesion with resolution a year later.

Behçet's syndrome is a multisystem inflammatory disorder of unknown aetiology.[1] It is a disorder of young adults with a male preponderance. There is a striking geographical variation in prevalence. The triad of oral and genital ulceration with hypopyon iritis is classic but neurological involvement is the most serious manifestation. There is no specific laboratory test and so diagnosis is made on clinical features. The International Study Group for Behçet's syndrome diagnostic criteria are recurrent oral ulceration plus two from recurrent genital ulceration, eye lesions, skin lesions, or positive pathergy test. Strict use of these criteria leads to underdiagnosis and it is accepted, as in this case, that experienced clinicians may make the diagnosis on the more unusual features of the syndrome. In the British series neuroBehçet's syndrome usually manifested as a subacute brainstem meningoencephalitis, occasionally with involvement of hemispheres or spinal cord. Brain MRI demonstrates lesions in about three quarters of patients with neuroBehcet's disease.[1]

To our knowledge this is the first report of Behçet's syndrome presenting with seizures. The phenomenology of the seizure cluster at presentation suggests that the focus was the lesion in the medial temporal lobe identified on the first MRI. As this lesion has regressed the prognosis for further seizures should be good and to date there has been no recurrence. There are occasional reports in the literature of seizures associated with Behçet's syndrome. A 35 year old man developed frank seizures coincident with a myocardial infarction and ventricular tachycardia after 2 years of Behçet's syndrome.[2] A 38 year old woman also developed generalised seizures and recurrent status epilepticus 3 years before a diagnosis of Behçet's syndrome.[3 4] A patient in a Turkish series was reported to have myoclonic jerks.[4] In these reports the phenomenology of epilepsy was not presented and no clear relation could be made to the disease process. There have been a few a reports of EEG abnormalities in some severely affected cases consisting of periodic lateralising epileptiform discharges (here herpes simplex encephalitis was the main differential diagnosis),[5] but mostly of non-specific EEG changes without prognostic value, as seen in the present case.

In summary, this case illustrates an unusual neurological complication of Behçet's syndrome. Diagnosis was made on the basis of a typical posterior uveitis, recurrent mouth ulceration, multiple focal CNS lesions on MRI, and constitutional upset. He presented with complex partial and secondary generalised seizures with a medial temporal lobe lesion on MRI that disappeared 6 months later.

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Morphological abnormalities of hepatic mitochondria in two patients with spinocerebellar ataxia type 7

The dominantly inherited spinocerebellar ataxias (ADCAs) are a clinically and genetically heterogenous group of neurodegenerative disorders characterised by premature neuronal loss in the cerebellum. The cardinal manifestations are ataxia, dysarthia, dysmetria, and intention tremor. These clinical findings are associated with varying degrees of other neurological symptoms due to degeneration of other components of the nervous system. The similarity in the clinical presentation of the ADCAs to the mitochondrial cytopathies is widely recognised. Ptosis, ophthalmoplegia, pyramidal and extrapyramidal symptoms, optic atrophy, retinopathy, dementia, and peripheral neuropathy may variably occur in both disorders. Patients with an ADCA are therefore often investigated to exclude a mitochondrial disease.

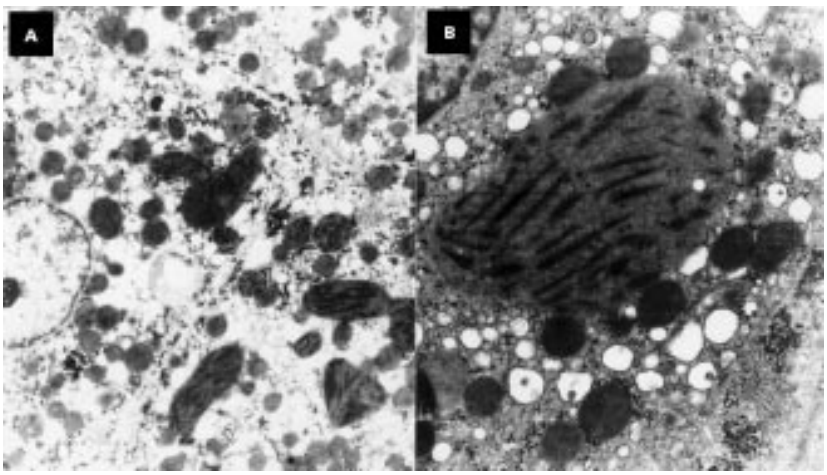
The ADCAs are divided into three groups (ADCA I, II, III) on the basis of associated findings.[1] ADCA II is characterised by the presence of a retinopathy.[2] It is caused by mutations (unstable trinucleotide expansion) in the coding region in a single gene, SCA7, on the short arm of chromosome 3.[3] The protein product, ataxin-7, has a nuclear localisation.[3] Clinically, patients with this rare condition present with visual impairment and ataxia, which may be associated with dementia, ophthalmoplegia, spasticity, and extrapyramidal symptoms.[2] We have identified two SCA7 families and report here on the finding of abnormal hepatic mitochondria in the index cases of the two families. This is a hitherto undescribed finding.

Patient 1 was a 20 year old black woman who presented with progressive ataxia and visual loss beginning at the age of 16 years. She had severely impaired mental functions, bilateral ptosis with external ophthalmoplegia, bilateral peripapillary and macular degeneration, distal weakness (bilateral foot drop) with depressed reflexes but intact sensation (nerve conductions studies were not done), and abnormal movements including a fixed torticollis to the right with ocular and palatal myoclonus. Brain CT and MRI showed marked cortical, cerebellar, and brainstem atrophy. Routine screens to exclude acquired causes of ataxia and retinal degeneration were carried out. Serum concentrations of pyruvate, lactate, vitamin E, and a fasting lipogram, liver function tests, assays for β-galactosidase, α-galactosidase, sphingomyelinase, β-glucosidase hexosaminidase, long chain fatty acids, copper, and caeruloplasmin were normal. Urine screened for organic amino acids, copper and heavy metals was normal or negative. There were no acanthocytes. Her CSF was normal. Histological examination of skeletal muscle showed no ragged red fibres (with Gomori trichrome stain) and no morphologically abnormal mitochondria on electron microscopy. Results from cytochrome oxidase, NADH-TR, succinic dehydrogenase, oil red O, and PAS stains were normal. Skin, conjunctival, and rectal biopsies were histologically normal and normal on electron microscopy. A liver biopsy was histologically normal. There was no fatty steatosis. On electron microscopy morphological abnormalities of the mitochondria were present. The figure shows the abnormalities of the mitochondria in shape and size. Paracrystalline inclusions, forming so called parking lot bodies were demonstrated. At least 50% of the mitochondria showed these abnormalities.

Blood samples were screened for the SCA 1, SCA 3/MJD (Machado-Joseph disease), and SCA 7 trinucleotide expansions. Polymerase chain reaction analysis of her DNA showed a SCA 7 CAG repeat length of 81 (normal 7 to 17 repeats[3]).

Her mother and two other siblings are affected. They did not have biochemical, histological, or genetic investigations.

Patient 2 was a 25 year old black woman who presented with progressive visual failure. She was ataxic and had bilateral peripapillary and macular degeneration with spasticity and



Photograph showing ultrastructural abnormalities of hepatic mitochondria. In (A) the abnormalities of size and shape are shown. The mitochondria are seen to contain amorphous paracrystalline and laminated inclusions. In (B), a higher power magnification of these shows the presence of laminated paracrystalline type inclusions in a mitochondrion.